

Focus Newsletter Fall 2001

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[Emergency Response Updated](#)

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, may be far removed from any of the acts of terrorism which have occurred in the United States during recent months, but City officials have been busy restructuring procedures for emergency responses to better fit the needs of this new era in American life.

Before September 11, the bulk of the City's procedures for dealing with emergency situations centered around responses to storm damage or floods. While those remain as crucial concerns for police and fire personnel, as well as other City employees who might be called upon in emergencies, there are new concerns demanding new reactions today.

The City has long had an Emergency Operations Team available when needed. That team is called into action whenever threatening weather is in the area.

In addition, an Emergency Review Team has been created to develop revisions which might be needed to existing procedures. One of the major changes in dealing with potential emergency situations is the reality that there is a greater chance today that those situations may be crimes, rather than acts of nature or accidents caused by man.

Another of the major changes is the need for special equipment (including protective clothing) in dealing with substances which might contain dangerous chemicals. Even before

Sept. 11 a change was being made in this area. The increase in the number of illegal methamphetamine labs in the area had led to the development of specially trained and equipped police officers in the Street Crimes Unit and in the fire department. When reports began to surface of anthrax spores being found in several areas of the nation, increased responsibilities were given to the Street Crimes Unit -- with the logic being that there was more of a chance that they would be dealing with a crime scene.

As citizens, here are the steps you should follow:

If you receive a letter or package which you feel is suspicious (the Postal Department has provided guidelines), call the Police Department at 259-8400. It is not necessary to call 911 unless you feel there is immediate danger to you or others in the area.

The police dispatchers who answer these calls will have a series of questions which will help determine if there seems to be a legitimate threat of a dangerous substance.

If the threat exists, a police officer will respond. And if that officer judges the threat to be serious, a Street Crimes Unit will be called to the scene. A Fire Department paramedic will also respond in case anyone at the scene requires medical assistance.

The substance in question will be collected as evidence and delivered within hours to the Oklahoma State Health Department in Oklahoma City for analysis. An initial report should be made quickly.

In most cases, there should be no necessity for the sealing of the area as a crime scene. It is highly unlikely that Police would order a disruption in home or business life.



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City Accepts Credit Card Payments

In an effort to make it easier for citizens to do business with their municipal government, the City of Broken Arrow is now offering the option of paying for most services with credit cards. Payment of water bills, court fines, permit fees, and most other services (including those through Parks & Recreation) can be made by credit cards. All major cards are accepted, including MasterCard, Visa, Discovery and American Express.

In one week during October (22-26) credit cards were used for a total of \$5,526.71 in payments to the Court Clerk's office and for other City services. To help ensure privacy protection of citizens, the credit card transactions are not kept on file by the City, but through a local bank which manages all transfers.



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Street Crews Prepared for Storms

A new breed of "hero" has developed in Broken Arrow over the past couple of years. And those heroes are ready to move into action as soon as they're needed this winter.

When winter weather hits the area with more than cold temperatures, the City's Public Works

Street Division will hit the roads with more than wheels. Last winter those crews won praise and adulation from Broken Arrowans and motorists passing through our community due to the manner in which they battled ice and snow.

Dave Wooden, Director of Public Works, points to good reasons for the success in that battle. "We combine salt and sand to improve traction on ice and give a more even distribution of material," said Wooden. "And we have snow plows on all of our sanders. That allows our crews to clear more roads and intersections in less time."

Wooden said that the City now has 12 dump trucks equipped with snow plows and sanders. That's two more than last winter. "The real key to our snow fighting efforts is the number of snow plows we employ. The snow plows move the bulk of the snow to the side so that the sand and salt have to deal with a smaller amount of material."

One problem with other cities in the area last year was the supply of salt. Winter began early (late October and early November for many) last year, and later snow and ice storms drained supplies. Broken Arrow avoided the problem by looking ahead and getting supplies from another area. The City starts this winter with 800 tons of salt and 800 tons of sand. It used 800 tons of salt and 2,400 tons of sand all of last winter.

Decisions are made late at night or very early in the morning about sending crews out, with first priority being emergency services. "We have to be sure that our police and fire departments can get out quickly to collisions and fires and health emergencies."

Then arterial streets are "attacked" by the crews, as are bridges and overpasses, followed by other streets in an order of needs.



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Special Home Loans Available

Broken Arrow residents who need financial help in eliminating health, safety and existing code violations within their homes may qualify for a special loan through HOME Investment Partnerships Program. The loans are made available to help homeowners bring their homes into compliance with the City's Housing Quality Standards.

The maximum loan amount is \$25,000. There are three types available: deferred payment, principal repayment and standard payment. Qualification for the loans is based on a sliding scale income, with number of family members factored in. Two of the loan programs are 0% interest.

For further information on these loans, or to obtain an application, call Loan Administrator Claudia Ellingsworth at 584-7526, or come by City Hall at 220 S. First.



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Funeral Service Makes Impression

The following email was received a day after the funeral services for Broken Arrow Police

Officer Lt. Kenneth Taylor, who died of pancreatic cancer. It is reprinted here with the permission of its author, Jim Dawson.

Yesterday as I traveled on Broadway I happened past the funeral home where all the policemen were in place for the funeral of the policeman who passed away. . . .the scene was one that deeply touched me and created an emotional moment for his family, the police department, and the people who were gathered there.

All the policemen and policewomen dressed in their uniforms brought back the impact of the scenes around New York and at the same time made a statement about the profession. I hurt for all of them and for all of our own. . . hoping that our community has gained a renewed appreciation for police personnel and for all that they do to make Broken Arrow a better place to live.

Before I left the scene I had to reach out and touch one of the policemen and tell him how much I appreciate all that they do and who they are ! Then I did leave the scene and that terrible hurt I experienced left and was replaced with a humble pride.

They not only looked good, but they looked proud to be who they were and they looked committed to the profession they had chosen and they gave me a brand new level of pride in Broken Arrow, Okla.

This is a good place to live and much of the credit goes to our mayor, our council, our city manager, the Chamber of Commerce, our firemen, but a great deal of that credit for the kind of city Broken Arrow is has to go to the police department. They are the ones who face the dangers and the ones who patrol to see that we are protected. . . . they are the special ones who say, "rest easy and enjoy our community we are watching out for you" !

I thank God for this community and for all those who make Broken Arrow what it is. . . . a great place to live.

Jim W. Dawson

Lt. Taylor had been caring for his wife, who suffers from Muscular Dystrophy. He had just had surgery and was recovering when the pancreatic cancer was discovered. He died shortly thereafter.

An account has been set up at First National Bank of Broken Arrow (121 S. Main, 74012) to assist the family. Donations may be sent to: "Benefit of Kenneth Taylor" at First National Bank.



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[Holiday Lights Brighten Season](#)

Nights in Broken Arrow have been a lot brighter since Thanksgiving, and it has nothing to do with meteor showers.

On Nov. 20, a program was held at Central Park to turn on the holiday light show which was such a big hit last year. The following night, Nov. 21, Rhema Bible Church lit up its huge display, which annually brings in visitors from all over Oklahoma and surrounding states. Both displays are free and open to the public. They will be turned on each night through the holiday

season.

Another highlight is the annual display across the street from Central Park, in the Veterans Park area surrounding the Childers Statue. "Holiday Lights in Central Park" features even more displays than last year. Additions were made possible through the Broken Arrow Visitors and Special Events Board (VASE), the Broken Arrow Girls Softball Association and the Ford Glass Plant (Visteon).

There are drive-through displays which include Victorian lamps, a family decorating a tree, a skating family, carolers and a children's area. There are several "deer" grazing throughout the park displays. Robin Marsh of Light Designs is the creator of the displays.

Donna Baldwin, Director of Tourism for the BA Chamber of Commerce, announced that the Broken Arrow Jaycees have adopted the Central Park lights as their community/civic project. Central Park was once known as "Jaycee Park." Scott Eudey, president of the Jaycees here, said members of his organization would be coordinating volunteers to work evenings in the park, welcoming visitors and accepting donations so that more lights may be added next year.



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[EPA Regulations Affect Annexation](#)

In the not-too-distant future the Environmental Protection Agency will be requiring Broken Arrow and other cities to provide test results of all stormwater as it enters and then leaves city limits. It's another mandated cost of doing "business" without any funding to help pay for the costs of the testing.

That's been one of the primary reasons for an accelerated annexation program by the City: the fewer "holes" there are within the city's fenceline, the fewer tests will have to be made.

The reasons for the beefed-up testing requirements in the future are good ones -- citizens need to know if the water which comes through their community in creeks and rivers is picking up a lot of pollutants along the way. If the water is being polluted, municipal governments can identify the sources much easier with the testing.

But, if there are areas within the City fenceline which are not annexed, the water must be tested as it enters those areas and again as it leaves. If those holes are closed, fewer of the expensive tests will be required.

Another factor in increased annexations over recent months is the opening of the South Loop Extension. Development around the turnpike will come about quickly, and annexed areas are easier to control.



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[Laser Checks Saving Money](#)

In its continuing efforts to put technology to work in saving the citizens of Broken Arrow money, the City is now using a laser check printing system which has the potential to impact

several departments.

Tom Cook of the Finance Department explained that the system does away with pre-printed check paper, which increases security. An overlay is created, to combine with a spool file. That eliminates the need for an employee to “baby sit.” And the same form software can be used for many other uses, including water bills.

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